

**Summary of the
Transition Committee Meeting
December 1, 1998**

The Transition Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Tuesday, December 1, 1998, at 11am by teleconference. The meeting was led by its chair, Dr. Charles Brokopp. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues on the prepared agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Brokopp opened the meeting with a roll-call of committee members and a review of the proposed agenda.. The summary of the November 17,1998 meeting was accepted by the committee. Dr. Brokopp reviewed the progress on the action items from the previous meeting.

APPROVAL OF ACCREDITING AUTHORITIES

Ms. Betsy Dutrow, NELAC Executive Secretary, reviewed the progress that NELAP is making in the processing of candidate accrediting authority. She noted that the current progress ranges from States responding to deficiencies noted in completed on-site assessments to States having not yet responded to deficiencies noted in their initial applications. However, NELAP staff estimates that at least 12 States are likely to complete all requirements to be included in the first-round announcement of NELAC accrediting authorities in the first quarter of 1999.

TIME LINES FOR APPROVAL OF ACCREDITING AUTHORITIES AND ACCREDITATION OF LABORATORIES

The following time lines for the approval of accrediting authorities and the accreditation of laboratories was suggested by Jerry Parr:

March 1999 (tentative)	First accrediting authorities approved
April 1999 - June 1999	Laboratory applications in first round to be processed
June 1999 - March 2000	Accrediting authorities review first round applications and perform one-half of the on-sites
April 2000	First round of laboratories approved and announced, including those with interim accreditation
April 2000 - March 2001	Remainder of on-sites completed for first round

QUESTIONS FOR ROUNDTABLE AT NELAC IVI

The logistics and timing issues of implementation of the NELAC standards by accrediting authorities and laboratories is a present concern, and is expected to continue indefinitely. As written, the standards are implicitly effective on adoption by the Conference. However, the time required for accrediting authorities and laboratories to adopt and implement the standards will vary, depending on the legislative and regulatory processes and the significance of the changes to the standards adopted by the Conference.

The issues of reciprocity, the timing of laboratory accreditation during the standard 2-year cycle for on-site assessments, the capacity of accrediting authorities for timely assessments, and the provision in the standards for limited interim accreditation (section 4.5.1) were discussed. Ms.

Dutrow noted that current NELAP practice is to assess candidate accrediting authorities under the standards in effect at the time of their application (i.e., July 1997). However, requests for assessments for conformity to the current (July 1998) standards, in their entirety, will be honored.

Possible solutions discussed included clarifications in the standards and stated effective dates for each revision. It was noted that other organizations have successfully addressed this issue: Ms. Dutrow agreed to investigate how the National Conference on Weights and Measures handles this issue, and Mr. Parr will check with other organizations such as the ASTM.. They will forward their findings to Ms. Batterton.

INPUTS FROM LABORATORIES

A draft questionnaire that had been distributed to committee members was discussed. Specific questions, and the usefulness of possible responses was discussed in refining it.

NEXT MEETING

The agenda for the next meeting of this committee, scheduled for December 15, 1998, 11-12:30pm EST)

ACTION ITEMS
Transition Committee
December 1, 1998

Item No.	Action Item	Date Completed
1.	Ms. Dutrow and Mr. Parr to forward to Ms. Batterton their findings on the handling of the timing logistics of standards implementation by NCWM, ASTM, etc.	
2.	Ms. Batterton to prepare another draft of the “policy” on the effective date of NELAC standards.	
3.	Dr. Brokopp to obtain input on tentative time lines for the approval of accrediting authorities and the accreditation of laboratories	
4.	Mr. Parr and Dr. Brokopp to revise questionnaire to obtain information from potential accrediting authorities, other states, and laboratories.	

PARTICIPANTS
Transition Committee
December 1, 1998

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